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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 002373

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DEPARTMENT FOR SPECIAL ENVOY NATSIOS, AF A/S FRAZER, AND
AF/SPG
NSC FOR COURVILLE AND SHORTLEY

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [AU](#) [EG](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR: BASHIR POLITICALLY ISOLATED; MAY BE
LOOKING FOR WAY OUT

REF: KHARTOUM 2346

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CAMERON HUME; REASONS: 1.4(B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) President Bashir may be looking to escape his current political isolation over UN peacekeeping in Darfur, Minister of Cabinet Affairs Deng Alor told CDA Hume on September 25. Bashir told the Council of Ministers on September 24 that Egyptian President Mubarak had pressed him to accept a UN force, Deng said, but Bashir had restated his firm opposition, based on the Council's "unanimous vote" against a deployment. However, Alor later reminded Bashir that the Council had never settled its own decision making procedures; the Council normally sought a consensus, and avoided acting by majority vote. There had been no consensus on the UN force, Alor said, but the Council had never taken a vote, either. In that case, Bashir replied, the Council can always discuss the issue again, and invited Alor to put the item back on the cabinet's agenda. "I think he wants to find a way out," Alor told Hume.

¶2. (C) Bashir knows he is alone both at home and abroad, Alor continued, and understands that some in his own party are pushing him and Sudan further into isolation for their own political motives. "Do you know what the street is saying, Mr. President?" Alor had asked, and suggested that real information was not getting to him. Bashir had not responded, Alor said, but "he knows it's true." Elders from different political organizations had met Bashir recently to discuss Darfur, and Alor and a few senior SPLM colleagues plan to have a private meeting with him on September 26. Bashir and First Vice President Salva Kiir need to reconcile their positions on the CPA, consolidate their parties, and work together on Darfur, Alor said. "He must watch out. These people who are pushing him are hard on the country." Some of them were resisting a UN force out of a commitment to Islamic ideals, but a political confrontation could destroy the Islamist movement in Sudan, Alor predicted. "Some of them might be more harmful than Bashir thinks," he added wryly.

¶3. (C) Hume replied that Special Envoy Natsios would likely visit within the next few weeks, and that it would be important for him to meet with a broad spectrum of political leaders, both in Khartoum and Darfur; Bashir's declaration that U.S. officials would be restricted to 25 kilometers of the capital did not help. Alor agreed, and promised to discuss the issue with Bashir (reftel). European Commission President Barroso was due to arrive later this week, and was already scheduled to meet Bashir and Kiir, Alor said. But he didn't get a meeting with Second Vice President Taha, Alor joked. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs told him there was no need."

